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SUBJECT: UNSC REFORM: MEMBER STATES SPLIT ON BEGINNING
NEGOTIATIONS BUT PGA DETERMINED TO PRESS AHEAD

REF: USUN 343

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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¶1. (SBU) Summary. President of the UN General Assembly (PGA) Srgjan Kerim convened the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on June 17 to discuss the report prepared by his four-person Task Force with suggestions on moving forward towards inter-governmental negotiations (IGN) on UNSC reform. Major players largely reiterated their previous positions (reftel) and were divided over whether to proceed with IGN. The G-4 (India, Brazil, Japan, and Germany), a few African countries, the UK and France all expressed a willingness to begin IGN as soon as possible. India was particularly adamant about pursuing IGN and implied that it might put forward a draft resolution on UNSC reform if the negotiations do not begin soon. Uniting for Consensus (UFC) countries, led by Italy and Pakistan, along with Russia, China, and members of the Arab League, all expressed opposition to beginning IGN at this time because of the lack of an agreed text on which to conduct the negotiations. Ambassador Khalilzad reaffirmed U.S. support for modest expansion of the Council but emphasized that UNSC expansion must be accompanied by broader UN reform. At the conclusion of the meeting, PGA Kerim announced that the Task Force would start preparing a draft report for the OEWG to be delivered in mid-July, which could serve as the vehicle to formally launch IGN. End summary.

¶2. (C) Comment. The bottom line from this OEWG meeting was that there is no broad agreement on using the Task Force report as a basis for launching negotiations on UNSC reform. Despite this, Kerim professed optimism about the course ahead, and suggested that member states could agree to use some version of the Task Force report to begin IGN. We believe Kerim is projecting confidence because he knows India will table its draft resolution mandating the start of negotiations if the PGA does not find a way to do so himself. (Note: The Indian draft resolution was e-mailed to IO/UNP. End Note.) India's intervention, in which it complained about the lack of progress on UNSC reform, was largely a pre-emptive justification for tabling such a resolution - which, even if it fails to be adopted, would move the discussion out of the OEWG and force a vote on UNSC reform for the first time in more than three decades. So far, it remains unclear how much support India's resolution would garner, but much of its success or failure will depend on whether the PGA is seen to be moving the process forward in a credible way. End Comment.

PGA Looks Forward to IGN

12. (U) PGA Kerim opened the meeting by commending member states for their cooperative approach to the consultations on the drafting of his Task Force's report on UNSC reform. (Note: The Task Force report was e-mailed to IO/UNP. End Note.) He said that the seven principles introduced at the beginning of the process not only provide guidance for moving the process forward but also serve as a warranty ensuring the widest possible acceptance among the membership. He emphasized that UNSC reform is an integral element of the overall strengthening of the UN and that member states continue to make progress on management reform, mandate review, and system-wide coherence. Kerim reaffirmed that the OEWG is the principal body for consultations on UNSC reform. He noted growing recognition that the possibility of pursuing an intermediary approach might be the "highest common denominator option" at this stage. Kerim expressed his belief that the necessary preconditions to begin IGN during the 62nd session will have been achieved once the report of the Task Force reaches general agreement. He conveyed his intention to present the report of the OEWG to member states in mid-July, including a draft decision to be adopted by the UNGA, in order to facilitate the launch of IGN.

Major Players Restate Positions, Split on IGN

13. (U) Most member states reiterated their positions (reftel) on UNSC reform and spent most of their time on whether and

how to move the process forward. Many noted the lack of a single agreed text to serve as the basis for negotiations, but the majority of delegates expressed their determination to enter into IGN as soon as possible. The G-4 lined up behind this proposal. The P-5 was split. France and the UK expressed willingness to begin IGN and said they were open to an intermediary solution with a new category of seats with longer-term membership and the possibility of conversion to permanent membership. Russia said it favors the compactness of the UNSC and emphasized the need for the broadest possible support among member states for UNSC reform. China said it continued to be open-minded but emphasized that there is not yet sufficient common ground to move the process forward onto IGN. Egypt, speaking on behalf of the African Group, stated that it was still studying the report and was not in a position to give a firm response. Other African states, including South Africa, Mauritius, and Ethiopia, reaffirmed their commitment to the Ezulwini consensus, which calls for two permanent seats for Africa with veto rights, but expressed a willingness to engage in IGN.

14. (U) UFC delegations, led by Italy, Pakistan, Mexico, Argentina, South Korea, Canada, and Spain, coalesced around the notion that the member states were not ready to enter into negotiations at this time because the OEWG had not yet reached agreement on the modalities or framework for IGN, nor had it agreed on the elements to serve as the basis for negotiations. They continued to oppose the addition of new individual permanent members to the UNSC and advocated an intermediate approach that focuses on non-permanent seats for regions rather than seats for individual states. They criticized the report for not adequately reflecting the issue of regional representation. Italy stated that further consultations of the OEWG were required to meet the preconditions for IGN. The UFC was joined by Mauritania, speaking on behalf of the Arab League.

India and Rest of G-4 Push for IGN

15. (U) The Indian PermRep Nirupam Sen, joined to varying degrees by Brazil, Germany, and Japan, expressed dismay at the lack of progress on UNSC reform. Sen reiterated India's willingness to enter IGN but criticized what he viewed as the

report's consideration for a transitional or intermediate approach, noting that such an approach has been rejected by the African Group, by many small states, by India and others.

He argued that the basis for IGN should include all options, including expansion in the permanent category and an intermediate approach. Sen further criticized the report for omitting certain key perspectives, particularly those of the P-5, that support adding new permanent seats. Sen quoted Secretary Rice's recent article in Foreign Affairs to suggest that the U.S. is predisposed towards supporting India's bid for permanent membership on the UNSC. Brazil, Japan, and Germany also expressed concerns about the report's focus on the intermediary approach, but they were less critical of the report than Sen, and suggested that with certain modifications the report could serve as the basis for IGN. The G-4 and their supporters were main proponents of moving the discussions from the OEWG to the UNGA plenary, which would circumvent the OEWG practice of consensus decision-making.

U.S. Reiterates Support for Modest Expansion

¶7. (U) Ambassador Khalilzad began by thanking the PGA for convening the meeting and the members of the Task Force for their report. He reiterated that the U.S. remains open to a modest expansion of the Council but that it must preserve its effectiveness in responding to threats to international peace and security. Adding 50 percent more seats would not be, he noted, a modest expansion. He emphasized that new "extended" or permanent members must be uniquely qualified to assume their duties and that the expansion of the Council cannot be separated from broader UN reform. Ambassador Khalilzad indicated that Japan is qualified for permanent membership and that other states should also be considered. He stressed the importance of the role of the OEWG and asserted that adopting a fixed timeline for negotiations could be

counter-productive. He reaffirmed the U.S. position that the Council must address its own working methods. Ambassador Khalilzad made a point about the need for comprehensive reform of the UN in areas such as financing, decision-making in the UNGA, and oversight and accountability. In closing, he stated that the U.S. hoped to work with other member states to achieve comprehensive reform and secure the future of the UN for the next 50 years.

Next Steps: Awaiting the Task Force Draft Report

¶8. (SBU) At the close of the meeting, Kerim announced that the Task Force will start preparing a draft report for the OEWG that will be delivered in mid-July. He reported that the willingness to enter negotiations was largely supported and that, despite the criticism of the Task Force report expressed by several member states, the membership was not far away from general agreement on using the report as a basis for IGN. The PGA's draft report on the work of the OEWG during the 62nd session of the UNGA could serve as the vehicle to launch IGN. But the UNGA resolution that traditionally endorses this report and extends the life of the OEWG until the next UNGA session is typically adopted by consensus, which seems like it will be difficult to achieve given the comments expressed during this OEWG meeting. Khalilzad